Melady’s Monet Up Against Post Position 10 In Cutler

Melady’s Monet has already won six top-class races at the Meadowlands this year, not once starting from the left-hand side of the starting gate.

Melady’s Monet’s wins have come once from post 6, twice from posts 7 and 8, and once from post 9. Although he’s had success from the disadvantageous starting spots, the 6-year-old trotter will have his work cut out for him Saturday night when he starts from post 10 in the $183,650 Arthur J. Cutler Memorial final at the Meadowlands.

John Campbell drives Melady’s Monet, and many times over his career he has simply said about a bad draw, “Post position is just a starting point.” Melady’s Monet’s trainer, Kevin McDermott, said that’s what the Hall of Famer told him after the Cutler draw.

“I’m sick of Campbell telling me it’s just a starting spot,” McDermott said with a laugh. “We had the 10 hole in the Breeders Crown (Yes Its True in the 2001 Older Mare Pace at the Meadowlands, who finished fourth) and he told me the same story.”

Melady’s Monet finished third in last weekend’s Cutler prep, a race won by the 2013 Horse of the Year Bee A Magician, the lone mare Cutler starter. McDermott doesn’t take solace in the fact that Bee A Magician won the prep from post 10.

“She’s a great horse, there’s no ifs or buts about it,” he said. “She absolutely is the one to beat.”

As for race strategy for Campbell from a post that has a win average of 8.2 percent this year at the Big M, McDermott remains realistic.

“I just say it’s a long year,” said McDermott. “Don’t kill him from the 10 hole; you race for a check and see what happens. And then move on to the next week. We have a shot but we’re up against it and we’ll do the best we can.”

McDermott concluded by saying he hopes for a boost from Mother Nature on Saturday.

“They are calling for rain here Saturday which helps closers, so hopefully John will be able to float into the five or six hole and see how things work out,” he said.— By Gordon Waterstone

Sebastian K To Qualify May 23

Saturday night’s 13-race card at the Meadowlands features the $183,650 Arthur J. Cutler Memorial final for older trotters. While the race includes the 2013 Horse of the Year Bee A Magician, who won last week’s Cutler prep in 1:51.3, and two-time divisional champ Market Share, it does not include defending Cutler victor Sebastian K.

In what was his initial North American start after a standout career in Sweden, Sebastian K took this continent by storm in 2014. The Ake Svanstedt trainee was sharp right out of the box, capturing his Cutler elimination in his debut in 1:50.1, a world-record effort as well as the fastest trotting mile ever at the Meadowlands. Sebastian K later lowered his mark to 1:49f on his way to being voted Older Trotter of the Year and runner-up to Shake It Cerry as Trotter of the Year.

So where’s Sebastian K this year as the Cutler final looms on the horizon?

“He will qualify a week from Saturday (May 23),” said Svanstedt Stable assistant trainer Bjorn “Bernie” Noren.

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“We’re going to wait a little bit because he got tired at the end of last year and got out of form.”

Noren was referring to Sebastian K’s last four starts of 2014, where he had one second-place finish and three off-the-board outings. The trotter was sensational in his first nine starts of the 2014 season, posting eight wins—including the $175,000 Cutler final, the $236,000 Crawford Farms, the $300,650 John Cashman Jr. Memorial and his 1:49 mile in the $100,000 Sun Invitational at Pocono Downs—and only a nose loss in the $560,790 Maple Leaf Trot.

Noren said Sebastian K’s winter break at the Svanstedt base at the Palema Trotting Center in Vero Beach, Fla., included a two-month period in December and January when his semen was collected for breeding. “Since then he’s been training back very good and he feels better,” said Noren.

Noren hopes to find Sebastian K some races at the Meadowlands in June before heading to Pocono Downs to defend his title in the Sun Invitational on the Sun Stakes card on Saturday, July 4.—By Gordon Waterstone

### This Week’s Featured Races

**Friday, May 15**
- 7:38p M2 NJSS 3CT division [Trackmaster PPs](#)
- 8:20p M4 NJSS 3CT division [Trackmaster PPs](#)
- 10:50 M11 NJSS 3FT [Trackmaster PPs](#)

**Saturday, May 16**
- 11:25a Mea1 PASS 3FT division [Trackmaster PPs](#)
- 12:05p Mea3 PASS 3FT division [Trackmaster PPs](#)
- 6:49p PcD2 Open Trot [Trackmaster PPs](#)
- 8:20p M4 NJSS 3CP division [Trackmaster PPs](#)
- 9:12p PcD10 PASS 3CP division [Trackmaster PPs](#)
- 9:24p M7 Cutler Memorial Trot [Trackmaster PPs](#)
- 10:08p M9 NJSS 3CP division [Trackmaster PPs](#)
- 10:50p M11 TVG FFA Pace [Trackmaster PPs](#)

**6th Annual Lisa Photo STRIDE FOR THE CURE**

To benefit the research efforts in defeating breast cancer

**Saturday May 16th**

LIVE RACING begins 7:15

**MEADOWLANDS RACING & ENTERTAINMENT**

Live Music featuring The Past Masters

Beginning at 6pm
New Jersey Sires Stakes Get Underway

The 2015 New Jersey Sires Stakes (NJSS) gets underway this weekend at the Meadowlands, with trotters going postward Friday and pacers on the track on Saturday.

All 15 three-year-old male trotters scheduled to go behind the gate in a pair of $20,000 divisions of the first leg of NJSS Friday night are eligible to the Hambletonian on Aug. 8. Besides those 15 Hambo hopefuls, the filly Mission Brief, who is being pointed toward an engagement with her male rivals in the trotting classic, will start in the lone $25,000 NJSS division for distaff trotters.

Guess who is back? It’s Guess Whos Back, who won last year’s NJSS final for 2-year-old colt trotters in 1:56.1 for driver Brian Sears and trainer Nik Drennan. A $90,000 yearling purchase by Joe Davino and Brad Shackman, interests in the son of Muscles Yankee were sold to TLP Stable and J&T Silva Stable early last August.

“Just because he had a good qualifier, that doesn’t mean anything to me…”

–Nik Drennan on Guess Whos Back

Guess Whos Back will start from post 1 in the first NJSS division (Race 2). Brian Sears will drive Guess Whos Back before he heads back over the Hudson River to finish the night at Yonkers.

Guess Whos Back had two wins, one second and one third in eight starts as a freshman, with earnings of $92,350. His four losses all came as a result of making a break. Friday night’s start will be the first of the year for Guess Whos Back, who remained flat in both qualifying starts, including a 1:53.3 romp by 7 ¼ lengths on May 9.

“Just because he had a good qualifier, that doesn’t mean anything to me, to be honest with you,” said Drennan.

“We'll see how he goes Friday night and go from there.”

Drennan said Guess Whos Back’s freshman miscues were likely a result of the colt’s large stature.

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“He was pretty big last year and that was a lot of his problem,” said Drennan. “He matured a little bit this year.”

Although Drennan said the Hambletonian is a target point, he is remaining cautious.

“I don’t want to get overly high because he disappointed me last year and until he does something this year, I’m not going to say anything,” said Drennan. “It’s there (the Hambletonian) but he had a couple good starts last year at the beginning of the year and that was it. I talked to Brian (Sears) and we’re not going to get too high on him. We’ll take it a week at a time and a race at a time and see how it goes. Time will tell.”

Trainer Ake Svanstedt has five relatively unheralded colts going postward in the two splits. Combined, the quintet has just three wins in 37 career starts, with those numbers including that of Mountain Top, who had a 14-1-2-2 resume while in the barn of trainer Francisco Del Cid last year. Mountain Top’s lone victory was a 2:02.2h effort in a Green Acres division at Freehold. A son of Muscle Hill, Mountain Top’s dam, Diana Hill, won the 2008 Moni Maker final at The Red Mile and finished fourth in the Hambletonian Oaks.

Mountain Top starts from post 6 in the second NJSS split (Race 4). Stablemate Crescent Fashion will start from post 1. A daughter of Muscle Hill, Crescent Fashion is out of the mare Fashion Feline, who won the 2009 Pennsylvania Sires Stakes championship and the 2010 Kentucky Filly Futurity. This will be the 2015 debut for Crescent Fashion, who had one win in three starts last year.

Svanstedt’s trio in the first NJSS division includes Natural Kemp (post 4), Stonebridge Force (7) and Southwind Mozart (8).

Natural Kemp, owned by Meadowlands’ chairman Jeff Gural’s Little E LLC, was first and second in his two freshman starts and has two off-the-board outings in 2015. A son of Muscles Yankee, Natural Kemp is out of Impressive Kemp, a half-sister to 2014 Hambletonian winner Trixton and the winner of the 2010 Breeders Crown 3-Year-Old Filly Trot.

Stonebridge Force is a half-brother to 2008 Hambletonian Oaks winner Creamy Mimi. Stonebridge Force’s dam, Cream Puff, is a half-sister to the 2002 Two-Year-Old Filly Trotter of the Year Pizza Dolce. A son of Muscle Hill, Stonebridge Force was winless in seven starts last year and has nothing to show thus far in 2015 from two starts. Southwind Mozart, also a maiden after four career attempts, is also a son of Muscle Hill. He is a half-brother to Southwind Cocoa, who won the 2012 New Jersey Sires Stakes final for 2-year-old filly trotters.—By Gordon Waterstone
Mission Brief Begins
“Mission Hambletonian”

“She is her own woman, that is for sure,” said trainer Ron Burke as he described his brilliantly fast, yet quirky world champion Mission Brief.

Last year’s champion 2-year-old trotting filly, who set the world record of 1:50.3 at The Red Mile, makes her official 3-year-old debut Friday in the opening leg of the New Jersey Sires Stakes at the Meadowlands. Mission Brief earned $591,070 last year in nine wins including a season-ending victory in the Breeders Crown. She also broke stride in four races.

“I have told the other owners that with this horse, the highs will be really high and the lows will be horrible,” said Burke. “With her, I’m holding my breath and maybe getting ready to drive to the George Washington Bridge.”

Mission Brief made a break in her first qualifier on May 1, a miscue that Burke attributes to a shoeing change that the temperamental filly did not like. She stayed trotting in her second qualifier a week later, a victory in 1:56.2.

“I tried to shoe her a little more aggressively like I shoe most of my other good trotters and she just didn’t take to it so we switched her shoes back to how we had them last year,” explained Burke.

Mission Brief, owned by Burke Racing Stable, Our Horse Cents Stable, J&T Silva Stables, and Weaver Bruscemi, faces nine other rivals in Friday’s New Jersey Sires Stakes, which is carded as race 1 on the 12-race card. Yannick Gingras will take his usual seat behind the daughter of Muscle Hill. She is the 3-5 morning line favorite and carries career earnings higher than the rest of her nine rivals combined.

“She was great training this week and maybe she is just waiting for us to get aggressive with her,” said Burke. “It seems that the hardest quarters for her are when she has to go medium speed. She can easily warm up in 35-second quarters and can go those big 27-second quarters in a race, but it’s going that in-between-speed that seems to be the hardest.” (Meadowlands)

Artsgpeak Returns To Defend NJSS Title

Artspeak kicked off his 2-Year-Old Colt Pacer of the Year campaign in 2014 with wins in a New Jersey Sires Stakes (NJSS) preliminary and then the $100,000 final at the Meadowlands, and trainer Tony Alagna is hoping for the same this year when the son of Western Ideal goes postward in the first of two $20,000 NJSS divisions Saturday night. Alagna will also send out Revenge Shark in the second NJSS split.

Artspeak followed up his win in the NJSS final on July 12 with six more victories, including the $613,640 Metro final at Mohawk where he posted a career-best 1:50.2 effort. It wasn’t until Oct. 4 that Artspeak finally tasted defeat. He went on to win the $502,850 Governor’s Cup final, which was also his final start of the year.

Despite missing the Breeders Crown, Artspeak was easily voted divisional honors in the U.S. and Canada. The $100,000 yearling purchase by Marvin Katz, Joe Sbrocco, In The Gym Partners and co-breeder Brittany Farms finished the year with a record of 10-8-0-2 and $742,185 in earnings.

Artspeak will start from post 4 in Race 4 with Scott Zeron driving. The colt comes into the race off a pair of qualifiers at the Meadowlands. He started from post 10 in the first qualifier on April 25 and made a break at the three-quarters, and then in his second qualifier on May 9 he finished fifth, race-timed in 1:53.4, last quarter in :26.4.

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“I had his hobbles out too long, longer where they were last year. So I took him back in to where they were last year,” Alagna explained of Artspeak’s miscue in the first qualifier. “I trained him and he trained very, very good, so we put him back in to qualify and he was perfect the other day.

“It was what he did after the wire that nobody sees on the chart. The people that watched the qualifier got to see what he did after the wire. He took off 100 miles an hour and circled the field. He (Zeron) let him pace out and he was perfect.”

Alagna said while he’s penciled in some races on Artspeak’s schedule, nothing has been written in pen.

“We’ve mapped out a schedule for him, but just like we did with ‘The Captain’ (Captaintreacherous), we take it a race at a time,” he said. “He’ll tell us a race at a time what his next race is.”

As for Artspeak’s physical changes from two to three, Alagna said, “He always had a great work ethic last year, but he’s grown and matured quite a bit. He was always a very strong colt last year as a 2 year old, and now he’s gotten a little bigger and a little stronger.”

As for Revenge Shark, a Cam’s Card Shark colt Alagna co-owns with Brad Grant, he will start from post 4 in Race 9 with Zeron driving. Revenge Shark had a win and second in just two fall freshman appearances last year at The Red Mile. Both starts came in late-closing events, including his 1:51.2 victory.

Revenge Shark has made six starts thus far in 2015, including a trio of fourth-place finishes in the Buddy Gilmour Series preliminaries and final at the Meadowlands. Then in a March 21 overnight at the Meadowlands, Revenge Shark scored a career-best 1:50.4 victory, which was followed up a pair of photo-finish second-place finishes in the Spring Preview Series. On May 9 Revenge Shark finished second in a qualifier at the Big M, losing to the highly-regarded In The Arsenal by just a length.

“This colt qualified super; he needed a prep for the New Jersey Sires,” said Alagna. “He’s been good all along. He was good in the Spring Preview Series and won in 1:50.4 after the Buddy Gilmour. He didn’t race last year but twice and now he’s getting some starts under his belt and he just gets better all the time.” — By Gordon Waterstone

Good News From Hunterton; Setback For Always B Miki

Just when you think the racing business is tougher than the breeding business, you hear a story that makes you think otherwise. Then another piece of news comes along and you are reminded that both are tough ventures.

A few weeks ago I kept up with the misfortune of Southwind Serena and her owners. The dam of world champion Mission Brief was near foaling when she suffered a bout of colic that almost took both her life and the life of the colt she was carrying. Lucky for “Serena,” she resides at Hunterton Farm in Paris, Ky., and Hunterton’s Steve Stewart had a top veterinarian nearby who was able to save the mare and her colt by Muscle Hill.

Steve told me if Southwind Serena had not lived in Bluegrass horse country, where top veterinary clinics and professionals are just a phone call and a short drive away, “Serena” and her foal probably wouldn’t have made it through the crisis.

Breeder Tom Cooke of Maryland did not fare so well when his mare Martiniontherocks went into duress earlier this month while trying to foal. The foal was upside down and the mare and foal couldn’t be saved. When I talked to Tom last week he was naturally devastated and still wondering how the mare’s foaling took the tragic turn.

Since the scare with Southwind Serena, Steve Stewart had better news to share with me. On Tuesday night (May 12) Graceful Touch, the dam of Hambletonian champion Muscle Massive, Muscle Mass and Thatsonynamen, gave birth to a filly by Cantab Hall, and a couple of hours after the clock passed the midnight hour Emilie Cas El, the dam of last year’s Hambletonian winner Trixton, delivered a colt by Muscle Hill, and all were fine.

On the racing front, here’s a reminder of just how tough it can be. Always B Miki, who suffered a P-1 (long pastern) fracture in his left hind foot last November and had it repaired with surgery, had been training beautifully this spring for trainer Jimmy Takter. Takter took the now 4-year-old stallion to train at the Meadowlands last Saturday (May 9) and told the horse’s owners afterward that he was expecting a June racing debut. But by Monday morning “Miki” showed soreness and with the setback Takter is now hoping for a late summer start for the horse.

Always B Miki was bred and is still co-owned by Joe Hurley (RollThe Dice Stable), who only has two mares these days. Hurley has suffered some bad luck as a breeder as well. Artstopper, the dam of Always B Miki and the top older pacing mare Yagonnakissmeornot, has been barren the past two years. Hurley told me she was bred to Always A Virgin earlier this year and is now in foal. — By Kathy Parker
Seekman Hopes To Sip From “Cup” With Let’s Drink On It

Although Let’s Drink On It is a 15-time winner with $625,389 in earnings, the 4-year-old son of Art Official is still seeking that “signature” victory to stamp his career. Trainer Joe Seekman is hoping that elusive major score will come Sunday night at Flamboro Downs when Let’s Drink On It starts from post 8 in the $226,575 (C) Confederation Cup final.

The Confederation Cup returns after a two-year hiatus, now for 4-year-old pacers. First contested in 1977, the Confederation Cup had been for 3-year-old pacers and was won by such stars as Abercrombie, Cam Fella, On The Road Again, Matt’s Scooter, Art Major, American Ideal and Somebeachsomewhere.

After opening up 2015 with a pair of second-place finishes at Hoosier Park, Let’s Drink On It is riding a two-race win streak, including capturing his Confederation Cup elimination last Sunday night by five lengths in 1:51.4. Let’s Drink On It was sixth early but then after picking up a second-over trip, was moved three wide at the top of the lane to easily draw clear of the competition. It was a picture-perfect steer by Billy Davis Jr., who picked up the mount late after named driver Tyler Smith was unable to make the trip to Dundas, Ont., about 40 miles west of Toronto.

With Seekman remaining home at his base in Crete, Ill, his wife, Tina, is listed as trainer of Let’s Drink On It at Flamboro. Tina Seekman, who shares ownership of Let’s Drink On It with Larry Bond, Hal Hewitt and Vince Boido Jr., had just one training start prior to the Confederation Cup elim, that coming in a January overnight at Miami Valley.

“Billy drives on that track quite a bit and we went with him and everything worked out good,” Tina explained of choosing Davis, currently second in the Flamboro dash standings. “I told Billy to not try leaving with him because he’d just get himself in trouble that way. I told him to get a second-over trip if possible and he did exactly what we told him.”

It’s not as if Let’s Drink On It hasn’t had his chances in major stakes. After winning three times on the Pennsylvania Sires Stakes (PASS) to open up his 2-year-old year, Let’s Drink On It won his Metro Pace elimination at Mohawk, but then ran into road trouble—that included an interference break in the stretch—in the $648,750 final and was disqualified. That was followed up with a disastrous first-over trip in the $260,000 PASS final at Harrah’s Philadelphia and another off-the-board finish.

After failing to advance from his Breeders Crown elim, Let’s Drink On It was able to get back on track by closing out the year with a win in the American National at Balmoral Park. At three, Let’s Drink On It was third in his North America Cup elim at Mohawk and then eighth in the $900,000 final.

“He always does good in the elims; hopefully it can carry through to a final.”

—Joe Seekman on Let’s Drink On It

$226,575 CONFEDERATION 4YOP

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<tr>
<th>Post—Horse</th>
<th>Driver/Trainer</th>
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<tr>
<td>1—Ideal Cowboy</td>
<td>T. Tetrick/J. Bamond Jr.</td>
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<td>3—National Debt</td>
<td>C. Christoforou/R. Fellow</td>
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<td>4—Nirvana Seelster</td>
<td>J. Jamieson/W. Budd</td>
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<td>5—All Bets Off</td>
<td>M. Kakaley/R. Burke</td>
<td>8-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6—Limelight Beach</td>
<td>Y. Gingras/R. Burke</td>
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<tr>
<td>7—Bettover</td>
<td>C. Callahan/J. Bamond Jr.</td>
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<td>8—Let’s Drink On It</td>
<td>B. Davis Jr./T. Seekman</td>
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<td>9—Somewhere Fancy</td>
<td>D. McNair/S. Mehlenbacher</td>
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$226,575 CONFEDERATION 4YOP

Flamboro Downs, Sunday, May 17, Race 10, Post Time: 9:00 pm

Let’s Drink On It later went on to win his Little Brown Jug elimination at Delaware, Ohio, but had to settle for second in the decisive second heat to Limelight Beach—who finished fourth in the same Confederation Cup elim.

“He always does good in the elims; hopefully it can carry through to a final,” said Joe Seekman. “This isn’t the first elimination he won.”

Seekman noted Let’s Drink On It’s proficiency on half-mile tracks such as Flamboro Downs.

“The horse likes a half-mile track and it’s proven,” he said. “That seems to be his fit. He’s a nice horse who, if you trip him up right, will be there at the end.”

The Confederation Cup field also includes the Ron Burke-trained, Yannick Gingras-driven All Bets Off, who will start from post 5 after capturing his elimination in a track-record 1:50.4, lowering the previous mark for 4-year-old pacers set in 2007 by Rare Jewel.

As for Sunday’s rich final being Tina Seekman’s third start as a trainer, she is optimistic of her chances.

“It would be wonderful to win it. They also say the third time is a charm, so we’ll see,” she concluded with a laugh.—By Gordon Waterstone
Invitations Still Available For Elitlopp

With the Elitlopp set for Sunday, May 31, racing organizers have a little more time to invite more horses, and await confirmations and possible defections.

As of May 13, those invited include Timoko, Maven, On Track Piraten, Digital Ink, Wind Of The North, B.B.S. Sugarlight, Aladin d’Ecajeul, Support Justice, Nahar and Voltigeur de Myrt, which means six invitations remain.

The Finlandia Ajo, like the Elitlopp, a one-mile sprint, will be held Sunday at the Vermo track in Helsinki, and the race could yield another Elitlopp contender. The winner of last year’s Finlandia Ajo, Univers du Pan, is back to defend his title and will joined by the runner-up in last year’s race, Oasis Bi.

On Monday, May 11, the U.S.-bred Delicious, who finished third in last year’s Elitlopp, made her first start of the season at the Bolinas track in Sweden but broke at the start and was never a contender in the race. The mare’s trainer-driver, Daniel Reden, told Swedish media that while he was disappointed Delicious broke stride, he was otherwise happy with her performance.

On Tuesday, May 12, Elitlopp invitee Aladin d’Ecajeul competed in Caen, France, but raced poorly, far behind race winner Roi du Lupin.

Outside of the Finlandia Ajo, Elitlopp organizers will be watching the V75 Gold race at the Aby track in Sweden on Saturday, when Reven d’Amour and Magic Tonight will compete. Nuncio, Digital Ink and Panne de Moteur were expected to be entered, but instead their trainers decided to wait another week for a race.

Last weekend (May 9-10) Robert Bi won the Copenhagen Cup by a neck over Maven, but Robert Bi’s connections declared they were not interested in racing their horse in the Elitlopp.

“No, we won’t participate in Elitlopp,” said Paul Hagoort, Robert Bi’s trainer. “He is just 5 years old and we have other plans for him this year. Our main goal of his career is Prix d’Amerique.”

Despite being edged on the wire, Maven’s performance in the world-record setting race for the distance (1.3 miles) was impressive as she opened up on the field and then fought gamely in the stretch drive. The third-place finisher was Voltigeur de Myrt, who also turned in a big effort, racing outside.

The Copenhagen Cup card also featured a victory by the mare D’One, and she should be on the radar of trotting fans in North America for a couple of reasons. First, she is scheduled to ship to the U.S. to compete in North America this summer and fall, and secondly, she is a daughter of Donato Hanover and Giant Diablo. She won in Copenhagen by a neck over Red Rose America (Varenne-Armbro Voice) and is now scheduled to compete on Elitlopp weekend in a race for mares.

Nahar, the 2013 Elitlopp champion, earned his Elitlopp invitation to the 2015 edition last weekend after winning a V75 Gold race at Umaker over Knows Nothing in 1:55.1. Nahar is now 10 years old, but trainer-driver Robert Bergh indicated he was pleased with his horse. Panne de Moteur was third in the race, which was his first start since last year’s Elitlopp. The American-owned Creatine also made his first start outside of North America on the Umaker card but finished off the board in a race contested over a distance of 2,140 meters (1.3 miles). — By Kathy Parker
**COLOR’S A VIRGIN**, who didn’t fare well in the Sam “Chip” Noble Jr. Memorial at Miami Valley earlier in the month, is back in action on Friday at Hoosier Park. The 2014 Dan Patch 3-Year-Old Filly Pacer of the Year will start from post 8 in a filly and mare invitational. Her stablemate **CANDY’S A VIRGIN** will compete the same night in the filly and mare invitational at Scioto Downs.

**REVEREND HANOVER**, who trainer Casie Coleman gave high praise to in the April 15 issue of The Horseman which featured panelists’ projections for the upcoming season for 3-year-old pacers and trotters, makes his season debut on Saturday night at Mohawk against older horses. Unbeaten in four starts last year as he swept his way through the Ontario Sires Stakes, including the $250,000 Super Final, Reverend Hanover comes into the $25,000 conditioned race (he fits the also-eligible condition of non-winners of six races lifetime) off a pair of qualifying victories, including a 1:52.4 effort on May 8.

Chris Christoforou will drive Reverend Hanover from post 8 in Race 8. The field also includes the 4-year-olds **MELMERBY BEACH**, winner of a Simcoe division last year, and **BOOMBOOM BALLYKEEL**, winner of the 2013 Metro final.

Three-year-old filly trotters and 3-year-old colt pacers will be in Pennsylvania Sires Stakes (PASS) action on Saturday at The Meadows and Pocono Downs, respectively.

Because of Saturday being Preakness Day, The Meadows will have a special morning post time of 11:25 a.m. Race 1 is the first of four $48,316 PASS divisions, with the contest including recent Lady Suffolk division winner **EL LOVE** (post 3, Riina Rekila), **SMEXI**, last year’s 78-1 upset winner in the Goldsmith Maid who is making her season debut (post 1, Corey Callahan), **LIVININTHEFASTLANE** (post 4, Andy Miller), who won divisions of the Kentuckiana Stallion Management and International Stallion Stakes last year, **SCENTED ROSES** (post 5, Ake Svanstedt), a half sister to the $1-million winner Self Professed, and **MATTER HATTER** (post 6, Mike Wilder), winner of last year’s PASS championship consolation.

Besides Smexi, trainer Jimmy Takter will also send out **WILD HONEY** in the second PASS split (Race 3). Wild Honey (post 4, Yannick Gingras), who finished off the year with a Matron victory, became the fastest 2-year-old trotter on a half-mile track regardless of sex when she won a Standardbred division at Delaware, Ohio, in 1:55.2. **BEE THE QUEEN** (post 5), who won a Bluegrass division last year in a career-best 1:54.1, will make her season bow bow for trainer George Ducharme.

Takter also sends out 2014 Kindergarten final runner-up **SARCY** (post 6, Race 4) in the third PASS split.

The last of four PASS divisions at Pocono Downs Saturday night includes the second start of 2014 PASS champion **YANKEE BOUNTY** (post 8, Gingras). Yankee Bounty finished second in his sophomore debut last time out in a PA All Stars race at Pocono Downs, finishing 1 1/4 lengths behind **WAKIZASHI HANOVER** (post 5, Jim Morrill Jr.). Also in the race is multiple PASS winner **DRAGON EDDY** (post 4, Mike Simons), who finished fourth in last year’s PASS championship.

Also at Pocono Saturday, Miami Valley Distaff Trot winner **CLASSIC MARTINE** will square off against **SHAKE IT CERRY** in Race 2, with George Napolitano Jr. driving 2014 Dan Patch honoree Classic Martine and trainer Jimmy Takter scheduled to steer “Cerry.”

At Vernon Downs on Saturday night, the 3-year-old filly pacer **SASSA HANOVER** (Race 5) makes her first start of the season in one of four New York Sires Stakes divisions. Although the Ron Burke-trained filly will be driven by Andrew McCarthy, her regular driver is Gingras, who picked her to drive over JK She’salady in last fall’s Breeders Crown championship. **SHE’S HEAVENLY**, who already sports a mark of 1:50.4 this season, has post 4 in Race 9, with Chris Lems driving for trainer Robert Horowitz.
Palone’s 17,000 And Other Incredible Numbers

Just how much of a moon shot is Dave Palone’s 17,000 career driving wins? The numbers are startling. Maybe the biggest one is that if Palone stays healthy and keeps to his current pace—and there’s been no indication in recent years why he shouldn’t—he’ll surpass 20,000 wins in a little more than four year’s time.

Stop and think about that for a second—20,000 wins. Heck, I can’t even get my head around 17,000. And, 20,000 is not only possible, it’s likely. Palone is 53 in a sport in which top drivers routinely stay productive until age 60. Over his 35-year career, Palone averaged 486 wins a season. He’s even bet better over the last 10 seasons where he’s made, on average, 675 trips to the winner’s circle each and every year. If he stays on that pace, Palone will have nearly 22,000 wins by his 60th birthday. Again, that’s not inconceivable at his home track The Meadows, where the driving colony isn’t as deep as those at the Meadowlands, Yonkers and Mohawk. Race for 10 more years at that 675-wins-a-year clip and Palone would top 23,750 career wins.

Compare him to jockeys and the numbers are even more impressive. Palone has won nearly 4,500 more races than the sport’s top jockey, Russell Baze, who has 12,543 wins to his credit and has a commanding lead on the all-time riders’ list over second-place Laffit Pincay Jr. who won 9,530 times. To be fair, Palone has started in nearly 12,000 more races than Baze, though he still leads the jockey by a sizeable margin in career win percentage—26.4 percent compared to Baze’s 24 percent. Still, Baze is 56, so there’s no way he’s coming even close to catching Palone.

As for his harness racing contemporaries, Palone’s numbers are in no immediate threat. His chief rival, Germany’s Heinz Wewering, has nearly 16,800 wins at last check. But Wewering is 65 and is extremely unlikely to be able to match Palone’s torrid pace. Palone long ago passed retired drivers Herve Filion (15,183) and Cat Manzi (14,812). Tony Morgan, 56, is third on the all-time dash list with 15,059 wins. Morgan will likely pass Filion for second place before he’s done, but it’s extremely doubtful he’ll catch Palone, who is three years younger.

What about some of the younger bucks? Let’s look at Tim Tetrick, 33. He’s in his 18th season and already has 6,690 wins to his name. He also set the single-season dash record of 1,189 wins in 2007, which means he’s one of the better candidates, to date, to challenge Palone’s all-time title. Tetrick has averaged 479 wins a year over his career. If he stays at that pace to age 60, he’ll have approximately 20,000 wins to his credit, which is probably not enough to match Palone’s projected totals. Yet, over the last 10 years, Tetrick has been on a faster pace than Palone, averaging 720 wins a year. If he keeps up that pace for the next 27 years, he’ll win more than 26,000 career races and be the sport’s all-time dash king. Possible?

Given the increase in purse money due to slots—and having no idea what direction purses will go in years to come—projecting career driver earnings is trickier. It’s entirely likely any number of younger drivers—Tetrick, Yannick Gingras, Brian Sears, George Brennan, etc.—will surpass John Campbell for the all-time money title.

Still, Campbell’s nearly $292 million in career earnings is damn impressive, especially when you compare him to our Thoroughbred cousins, who typically race for higher purses.

Campbell—who turned 60 in April and still holds a commanding lead of some $76 million over second-place driver Ron Pierce ($215 million)—ranks fourth all-time when compared to jockeys John Velazquez ($324,416,169), Pat Day ($297,914,839) and Jerry Bailey ($296,188,735). Campbell will never catch Velazquez, who is just 43, but since Day and Bailey are both retired and fourth-place jockey Mike Smith is well back at some $265 million, Campbell very well could end up second, all-time on the combined drivers and jockeys money list.

He also could become the first driver to hit $300 million lifetime. Over the last four years, Campbell has averaged just under $4 million per season. If he stays at that pace, he’ll hit $300 million in a little over two years. Whether or not another driver surpasses it one day doesn’t make it any less impressive.

Both Campbell and Palone’s numbers are not only a testament to their talent and greatness, but also their incredible consistency and production for an incredible length of time. I can’t think of many athletes in other sports that could match them.

Dave Briggs was the editor of The Canadian Sportsman for 18 years and is an award-winning journalist. His column appears in HarnessRacing Weekend Preview in part through the advertising support of Hanover Shoe Farms and Woodbine Entertainment Group. Any opinions expressed in this column are his own and not necessarily those of the Horseman Publishing Company and its publications or its advertisers.
Will Bee A Magician Be First Mare Cutler Champ?

Every little thing she does is magic. Or at least it has been so far this season for Bee A Magician.

The 5-year-old female trotter, who was harness racing's 2013 Horse of the Year, has started her campaign with back-to-back wins over male rivals—first in a track-record performance in the Open Handicap at Yonkers Raceway and next from the Meadowlands' post 10 in a prep for Saturday's Arthur J. Cutler Memorial.

She will try to make it three in a row when she leaves from post eight with driver Brian Sears in the $183,650 Cutler Memorial final at the Big M. A mare has never won the Cutler, which was first contested in 1998. In fact, Bee A Magician is only the fourth to compete in the event, joining Fern (eighth in 2000), Mystical Sunshine (fifth in 2006) and Buck I St. Pat (second in 2011).

Last year, Bee A Magician won four of 17 races and earned $421,314 for owners Mel Hartman, Herb Liverman and David McDuffee. Her victories included the Breeders Crown Mare Trot and she finished second in the Hambletonian Maturity, Allerage Farms Mare Trot, and Ima Lula Series championship.

“She’s just bigger, stronger, more mature,” trainer Nifty Norman said. “It’s just the difference between being a 4 year old and a 5 year old. And she seems very settled and happy with herself. Her appetite is great and she just seems really content. Hopefully that trend continues.”

Last week, Bee A Magician and driver Scott Zeron left from post 10 and methodically moved to the front in an opening quarter-mile of :27.4. They yielded the lead to DW’s NY Yank prior to the halfway point and remained in second until exiting the final turn, when Zeron moved Bee A Magician to the outside and trotted home in a national season's best 1:51.3.

“It was fantastic,” Norman said. “I was very, very pleased with that. It was unbelievable. Scotty read the race well. No one left (from the starting gate) and he ended up getting a perfect trip really. But she was very good as well.

“I think Brian will probably try to do a similar thing to what Scotty did,” Norman said about the final. “He’ll probably put her in the flow and try to be the last horse to the top, I would imagine. But we’ll see how it works out.” (HRC)

Palone Wins 17,000th Career Race

In what the U.S. Trotting Association records as his 64,320th career drive, Dave Palone scored his all-time record 17,000th career victory on Wednesday afternoon (May 13) at The Meadows. Wasting no time, Palone won the first race on the card with Upfront Dean in 1:52 to reach the milestone.

Palone made a quarter-pole move with the 6-5 favorite Upfront Dean, who is trained by Ron Burke and owned by Burke Racing Stable and Weaver Bruscemi LLC. Upfront Dean was able to reach the wire a neck in front of a fast-closing McClelland and Tony Hall to gain the historic decision.

Palone, 53, began driving in 1982, with his career really taking off seven years later. The dominant driver at The Meadows ever since, Palone is averaging 515 wins per year, and has a streak of 23 consecutive years in which he won 500 races or more. His career win average stands at 26.4 percent.

Palone was inducted into harness racing's Hall of Fame in Goshen, N.Y., in 2010.

“It’s a nice number,” Palone said afterward, “and you have to wonder if anybody else will be able to get there. I know I won’t see it.”

El Diablo BR Ready For NJSS

El Diablo BR is getting thrown into the fire.

A Norwegian-born son of Muscle Hill, El Diablo BR makes only his fourth career start Friday when he faces six rivals in the second of two New Jersey Sires Stakes divisions for 3-year-old male trotters at the Meadowlands Racetrack. The field consists entirely of Hambletonian-eligible horses and includes stakes-winners Muscle Diamond and French Laundry.

“That's like the Hambletonian right from the get-go,” trainer Trond Smedshammer said. “I would have rather not found out this way what I’ve got, but that's the way it is with the New Jersey Sire Stakes.

“He showed some ability trotting in (1):55 and a piece as a 2 year old and now in (1):54.4 this year. I know he’s going to trot in (1):52, but that doesn’t necessarily mean he's good enough for the bigger stakes here. You see people qualifying in (1):52.”

El Diablo BR was bred by Norway’s Bjorn Rishaug and is out of the stakes-winning mare Fiery Chip.

Last year, the colt was limited to two starts because of sickness and soreness. He finished fifth in his debut, a preliminary division of the Kindergarten Series in which Habitat defeated The Bank by a neck, and was timed in 1:55.4. He then went off stride in a division of the New Jersey Sires Stakes Green Acres Series at Freehold and Smedshammer decided to turn out the colt for the rest of the year.

El Diablo BR came back this season and began his campaign with a second-place finish from post nine in a conditioned race at the Meadowlands. The race was won by Soboro Hanover, who also is eligible to the Hambletonian.

“He trained good all winter,” Smedshammer said. “He’s been a little bit of a bully at the Meadowlands. He comes on the track and he wants to be a tough guy and kick and stuff like that. Hopefully by racing every week he’ll settle down and learn. He's going to be going a few weeks in a row now and if he's any good he's got the Goodtimes right after. He'll get plenty of races in the next five weeks, that's for sure.

Continues on page 12 ››››
“He’s also got stakes back there (in Norway). The Norwegian stakes competition level is like night and day compared to here. If he’s not good enough here, he’ll go back there.” (HRC)

New Paradigm For Drug Violations In Works

The Drug Testing Standards and Practices Committee of the Association of Racing Commissioners International has voted to call for public comment draft rule language that would create a new paradigm for drug prosecutions and impose a 10-year exclusion for those guilty of the most egregious violations.

Under the draft rule commissions would question the trainer and veterinarian of a horse found to have been “excessively” administered any substance, as shown typically by the amount detected in the horses’ system as a result of a biological sample test, regardless of whether it was in or out of competition.

The trainer or veterinarian would be required to prove, as a defense, that any particular administration of a substance in an “excessive” amount did not actually endanger the welfare of the horse or affect racing performance.

Levels indicating an administration of a medication far in excess of the recommended dosage consistent with generally accepted veterinary care could be considered “excessive” and an overdose. Extremely high levels of endogenous substances indicative of an independent administration beyond consumption of dietary supplements or vitamins consistent with recommended levels could also be questioned.

Those developing the draft believe that commissions would no longer have to wait for research or adopted testing thresholds to be developed and enacted in order to take action when a licensee cannot prove that what they gave to a horse was safe and did not affect performance.

The RCI Model Rules Committee will discuss this matter when it meets on July 15 in Deadwood, South Dakota. (RCI)

Indiana Changes Labs For Testing Samples

The Indiana Horse Racing Commission (IHRC) has terminated its contract with Truesdail Laboratory (Tustin, Calif.), its primary laboratory, after Truesdail failed to report positive findings in three samples that contained drugs in violation of Indiana’s medication rules.

The drugs, isoflupredone and betamethasone, were detected by the Commission’s audit laboratory, Industrial Laboratories (Denver, Colo.), and confirmed by referee laboratory LGC Science, (Lexington, Ky.). The concentrations of the drugs found were approximately two to five times the thresholds established by Indiana’s medication rule, which is the same threshold as the RCI model rule.

Truesdail’s inability to detect the foreign substances in the three samples is a failure to meet agreed upon performance metrics. Effective immediately, all testing of equine samples will be performed by Industrial Laboratories, its new primary laboratory.

The three positive audit findings came after only three weeks of racing at Hoosier Park’s Standardbred race meet, which opened on March 27. Once the audit of Truesdail’s testing is complete, a staff report will be issued to the Commission and Indiana’s Department of Administration. The IHRC has no plans to proceed with disciplinary action related to any of the medication overages that Truesdail failed to detect when it was serving as the Commission’s primary laboratory. (IHRC)

Horseman Jim Brittingham Dies

Levin James “Jim” Brittingham, 75, of Snow Hill, Md., died Monday, May 11, surrounded by his family after a courageously fought battle with cancer.

Mr. Brittingham was born in Sign Post, Va., and he was the son of the late Levin Gillis and Ruth Ellen (Pettit) Brittingham. He was a Standardbred owner, trainer and driver for over 40 years, successfully competing in many of the sport’s most prestigious events. Among the horses he trained were the pacing colt Tattler’s Torpedo, the runner-up in the $774,750 Woodrow Wilson at the Meadowlands and $531,600 Metro final in 1994; the filly On Her Way, who won the $571,100 Sweetheart Pace at the Meadowlands in 1995; Dedicated Yankee and Scootin Yankee.

He was an avid Washington Redskins fan, devoted Republican, and talented singer and musician who entertained many with his impromptu performances. His love for the waterways in and around the Chesapeake Bay area was unmatched only by his love for his family. He was a member of Sign Post United Methodist Church, the U.S. Trotting Association and the Elk’s Lodge #1624 in Pocomoke. He also served in the U.S. Army, stationed in Germany for most of his service, from 1959 to 1964.

Mr. Brittingham is survived by his wife of nearly 53 years, Rosalie S. Brittingham; two daughters, Julie Brignac (Larry) of Tucson, Ariz., and Shannon L. Simpson (Derrick) of Berlin, Md., four beloved granddaughters, Colbey Sirman, Shae Brignac, Leah Simpson and Alyssa Simpson; and siblings, in-laws and extended family members. He was preceded in death by a brother, Jack Brittingham and two sisters, Olive Marshall and Betsy Jenkins.

A memorial service will be held at 6 p.m. on Monday, May 18, at Hastings Funeral Home, 19 S. Main Street, Selbyville, Del., with Rev. Dick Bunting officiating. Friends may call an hour prior to the service. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Regional Cancer Care Center of Atlantic General Hospital, 9733 Healthway Dr., Suite 101, Berlin, Md., 21811.
Harness Racing Leaders
Compiled by the USTA—through May 11, 2015 (week difference May 6-11).

Leading North American-Based Money-Winning Horses

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Leading Money-Winning Drivers

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Leaders Of The Week

Leaders Of The Week

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Raced by wins for May 6-11 from results at major North American pari-mutuel tracks.

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Ronnie Wrenn Jr. ........................................61 18-9-7
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Melissa Bechwith ......................................6
Nelson Willis ..........................................6
Brian Brown .............................................5
Herman Hagerman .....................................5
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Philip Sowers ..........................................5